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Senator Kevin Engler Files Complaint Against Contractors for Using Illegal Workers at Farmington Construction Site

JEFFERSON CITY – Senator Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, has filed a complaint with the attorney general’s office against the contractor and subcontractor hired to build the Hampton Inn in Farmington. The St. Francois County Sheriff’s department arrested 14 undocumented workers at the construction site on February 13.

Senator Engler filed the complaint against Thomas Construction and its subcontractor for using undocumented workers. Under a law approved by the Legislature in 2008, employers that knowingly hire or continue to employ illegal immigrants can face civil liability in state courts and lose their business licenses.

“The unemployment rate in St. Francois County is at 11.1 percent,” said Sen. Engler. “It is outrageous that illegal aliens were receiving more than \$13 an hour when there are so many skilled local workers without jobs.”

When St. Francois County Sheriff Dan Bullock contacted the U.S. Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, he was told to release all but one of the illegal immigrants. The lone illegal alien that was held had a warrant for his arrest and was later picked up by immigration officials.

“It is unfortunate that immigration officials forced the St. Francois County sheriff’s department to release these illegal aliens, and frustrating that there is little we can do to make the federal government do its job,” said Sen. Engler. “However, we do have the ability to hold the employers liable for hiring these illegal immigrants. Filing this complaint begins that process.”

With the complaint filed, Sen. Engler said the attorney general’s office may now investigate and bring civil action against the businesses for knowingly employing illegal immigrants.

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